



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Paramont Coal's Black Bear #1 Surface Mine Wins National, Regional Recognition for Reclamation, Reforestation Efforts

Carrie, VA – Innovative reclamation practices, assistance in educational research and successful reforestation practices - all of which resulted in environmental improvements - have earned Paramont Coal Company Virginia, LLC's Black Bear #1 Surface Mine national and regional recognition. Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) officials joined Paramont officials and Black Bear #1 employees in a ceremony to formally recognize the mine's achievements at the mine site on Wednesday, May 31, 2006.

DMME Deputy Director Benny Wampler and DMME Division of Mined Land Reclamation (DMLR) Director Bradley "Butch" Lambert presented the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) National Reclamation Award, the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) Reforestation Award, and the first of DMLR's Excellence in Reclamation Awards to Paramont mine superintendent Jimmy Adkins and Alpha Natural Resources president and CEO Michael Quillen.

"It is always a pleasure to recognize achievements in reclamation by southwest Virginia coalfield mine operators, but it is an especially significant opportunity to present Paramont's Black Bear mine with three separate awards for reclamation and forestry," said DMLR Director Butch Lambert.

The Virginia Mining Association selected the Black Bear mine as its top reclamation award winner for 2006.

Paramont's Black Bear mine was recognized for a combination of activities and cooperative spirit that make the operation unique and set a standard for environmental quality. The mine's stream channel mitigation project and wetlands are highlights of the reclamation work, as is the reforestation effort.

Mining at the site consisted of contour surface operations on steep slopes and auger mining. The drainage control plan entailed the use of six ponds, a wetlands area and reconstructed stream channel. Numerous diversion channels associated with the ponds create adequate drainage control. The post mining land use for the remining site is a combination of unmanaged forest, managed forest, fish and wildlife habitat and wetlands. The combination of these land uses will provide a diverse habitat for wildlife, provide sufficient ground cover to control erosion and create high quality commercial resources.

Paramont committed to establishing high quality trees on the Black Bear #1 Surface Mine and accomplished this goal by selecting a mix of pines, hardwoods and nurse shrubs to reestablish the site. The planting schedule complemented construction of a natural stream channel, the first ever built on a coal mine site in Virginia. The slopes adjacent to the stream channel, for example, were planted with bulrush, arrow arum, wild rice, horsetail, arrowhead, water lily, sago pondweed, water celery, duckweed and elodea.

The operation demonstrates several important technical concepts about reforestation, such as using the best available soil material to create a suitable growth medium; eliminating excessive surface compaction to provide long-term positive impacts on revegetation; controlling ground cover that competes with tree growth; and using proper tree planting techniques to ensure productive yields.

The mine operation also shows that mining and reforestation is a winning combination because trees are a good investment and offer substantial revenue for landowners and job opportunities for local residents. Trees minimize soil erosion and provide wildlife habitat and diverse plant species. Planting trees restores our forests, which in turn provide for recreational activities including hunting, hiking and camping.

The IMCC is a multi-state governmental organization representing the natural resource interests of its 22 member states in Washington.

ARRI is a coalition of groups including government and academia that are dedicated to restoring forests on coal-mined land in the Eastern United States.

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